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## BOCA DIVORCE: Five Things To Do Before You Get Divorced

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By JODI FURR COLTON, Esq.

Life in Boca may look like a fairytale from the outside, but if you're not living as happily ever after as you want to be, a visit with a divorce lawyer may be the next step. Before you make that call, consider getting your ducks in a row.

1. **Gather all your financial information.** For virtually every divorce in Florida you are required to make full disclosure of your finances to your spouse. The more you have gathered before you see your lawyer, the faster the process will be. Either print out or make copies of the last three months of your bank, brokerage, retirement and credit card statements. Most of these types of statements are readily accessible online. You will also need your last three tax returns. If you don't have them your accountant might. It's preferable to make copies rather than taking the originals. First, your spouse might notice they are gone and wonder why, and second, your spouse's lawyer will want to see them too. There is no advantage to making the key documents difficult to find.
2. **Get a new email address.** Your lawyer will probably tell you to get an email address just for the divorce. This makes sense for a few reasons. Most lawyers will want to communicate with you by email. They will also most likely forward all the legal documents and correspondence relating to your case. As the postal service will tell you, no one "mails" mail anymore, so don't expect to receive piles of actual paper from your lawyer. It's nice to have all of your "divorce stuff" in one place rather than mixing it with your personal email—or worse, your work email. Opening a new email account also makes it less likely that you will accidentally send your spouse an email intended for your lawyer. Most importantly, people love to spy on each other, particularly if they think something is amiss. Your spouse probably knows your password or can guess it. Expect that he or she will try, and plan accordingly.
3. **Change your passwords.** For the same reasons that you need a new email address, you also need to secure all of your other online activities with a password your spouse doesn't know. Choose something that is impossible to guess.

4. **Investigate attorneys.** Do your research to find an attorney who is right for you and your situation. Ask friends and colleagues for recommendations and do your own research. Then choose wisely because you are going to be spending a lot of time with this person. Remember that the most aggressive and bullish lawyer is not necessarily the most effective. This person is going to be your voice, make sure you like the way that voice sounds.
5. **Consider marriage counseling.** Getting divorced is usually an emotionally exhausting experience. It's also really expensive. You owe it to yourself and your kids, if you have any, to make absolutely certain that divorce is your only option before you go down that path.

And a bonus tip: Don't join dating websites like match.com or adultfriendfinder while you are still married. Your spouse will find out, and he or she will more than likely be really, really mad.

*Jodi Furr Colton is a Boca Raton attorney with the law firm of Brinkley Morgan. She focuses her practice on divorce, alimony, equitable distribution, parental responsibility and timesharing. Jodi is a graduate of Harvard Law School, Swarthmore College and Pine Crest. She is happily married and the mother of two. Learn [more here](#), or telephone 561-241-3113.*